

Message Text

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TO ALL DIPLOMATIC POSTS

INFO USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 169505

GENEVA FOR AMBASSADOR YOUNG

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PLAB, ILO

SUBJECT: U.S. POSITION ON THE ILO

REF: REYKJAVICK 978(NOTAL),YAOUNDE 3060 (NOTAL)

1. FOLLOWING IS OURCURRENT ASSESSMENT OF THE ILO
SITUATION. POSTS SHOULD NOT INITIATE DISCUSSIONS WITH HOST
GOVERNMENTS BUT CAN DRAW ON FOLLOWING FOR BACKGROUND.
POSTS SHOULD REPORT ANY DISCUSSIONS WITH THE HOST
GOVERNMENTS.

2. WE BECAME AWARE SINCE JUNE 1977 INTERNATIONAL LABOR
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CONFERENCE (ILC) THAT MANY GOVERNMENTS, INCLUDING WESTERN
GOVERNMENTS, CONTINUE TO MISUNDERSTAND AND/OR
DISTORT U.S. POSITION ON THE ILO. WE ARE DISTURBED BY
THIS BECAUSE WHETHER THE U.S. STAYS IN OR LEAVES THE ILO,
IT IS ESSENTIAL FROM THE STANDPOINT OF THE UN SYSTEM AS A
WHOLE THAT WE NOT LOSE PROGRESS THAT HAS BEEN MADE IN THE
LAST TWO YEARS IN DRAUING ATTENTION OF A GROWING NUMBER OF

COUNTRIES TO UNHEALTHY TRENDS.

3. THE U.S. WAS VERY DISAPPOINTED WITH THE RESULTS OF THE JUNE 1977 ILO CONFERENCE SINCE IT ROLLED BACK PROGRESS MADE IN THE 18 PREVIOUS MONTHS AND DURING MARCH 1977 GOVERNING BODY MEETING. IN THIS CONTEXT, HOWEVER,

SOME GOVERNMENTS APPEAR TO BE SAYING THAT:(1) THE U.S. AT THE JUNE 1977 CONFERENCE HAD A TOTALLY INFLEXIBLE BOTTOM LINE POSITION -- EITHER SUPPORT ON KEY POSITIONS WITH A MAJORITY VOTE OR THE U.S. WILL GET OUT -- AND (2) SINCE THIS POSITION SO CATEGORICAL OUTCOME WAS INEVITABLE. IN FACT, U.S. STEADFASTLY RESISTED OVER TWO YEAR PERIOD EFFORTS BY OTHERS TO FORCE US TO DRAW SUCH AN INFLEXIBLE BOTTOM LINE. AS STATED IN OUR FINAL CIRCULAR TO ALL POSTS PRIOR TO JUNE 1977 CONFERENCE, "OUR PURPOSE IS NOT TO FORCE OUR VIEWS ON OTHERS BUT WITH THE BENEFIT OF THIS EXTRAORDINARY TWO-YEAR EFFORT AT CONSULTATION AND STUDY TO DETERMINE IF THERE REMAINS WITHIN THE ILO SUFFICIENT COMMUNITY OF INTEREST BETWEEN THE ILO AND OTHER MEMBERS OVER THE FUNDAMENTAL PURPOSES OF THE ILO." WE WERE NOT INSISTING ON VICTORY ACROSS THE BOARD BUT EVIDENCE OF CONTINUING MOMENTUM, SUSTAINED PROGRESS. WE WERE CONCERNED WITH PROGRESS IN CONCRETE FORM WHICH WOULD REFLECT MODIFICATION OF TRENDS ENUMERATED IN NOVEMBER 1975 LETTER.

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A. AGAINST THIS STANDARD, THE HEARTENING ASPECT OF THE LAST TWO YEARS WAS CLEARLY THE AWAKENING IN RESPONSE TO US PRESSURE, OF THE INDUSTRIALIZED DEMOCRATIC COUNTRIES, WHICH COLLECTIVELY VOTED TOGETHER AS AT NO TIME IN THE YEARS IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING OUR LETTER OF INTENT TO WITHDRAW. WITH THIS GROUP OF COUNTRIES, THE LAST TWO YEARS CLEARLY ESTABLISHED THAT THERE IS "SUFFICIENT COMMUNITY OF INTEREST", WHEN THEY ARE STIMULATED BY SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES. A SENIOR AFL-CIO OFFICIAL, WHO FINDS CONFERENCE RESULTS UNACCEPTABLE, NEVERTHELESS REMARKS THAT IT WAS "NO MEAN ACHIEVEMENT" IN LIGHT OF THE PAST TO RALLY 135 VOTES FOR POSITIONS OF CRITICAL INTEREST TO AFL-CIO AND USG. WE WERE HOWEVER GREATLY DISAPPOINTED THAT IMEC DID NOT PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE IN LOBBYING DEMARCHES, ETC.

B. ANOTHER DISAPPOINTMENT AT THE JUNE CONFERENCE WAS THE RESPONSE OF THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, MANY OF WHICH HAD ASSURED US IN HIGH-LEVEL CONVERSATIONS IN CAPITALS THAT THEY WOULD WORK WITH THE US FOR A FAVORABLE RESOLUTION OF SOME OR ALL OF THE KEY ISSUES COMING BEFORE THE CONFERENCE. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF SOME -- CAMEROON, HONDURAS, COLOMBIA, FIJI, NEPAL, PAPUA NEW GUINEA, JAMAICA, KENYA, SWAZILAND,

SURINAM -- THIRD WORLD DELEGATIONS EITHER AVOIDED THE ISSUE BY ABSENTING THEMSELVES FROM THE DELEGATION HALL OR BY JOINING THE COMMUNIST AND ARAB COUNTRIES IN ABSTAINING, A PROCEDURAL DEVICE DESIGNED TO DEFEAT KEY ISSUES OF INTEREST TO THE US. SOME OF THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WHICH OPPOSED US IN JUNE 1977 IN AN OPEN BALLOT HAD IN FACT SUPPORTED US IN MARCH 1977 ON SOME ISSUES UNDER THE SECRET BALLOT RULE OF THE GOVERNING BODY.

C. CLEARLY THE RECORD OF THE JUNE CONFERENCE WILL BE A CENTRAL FACTOR IN FINAL US DECISION. HAD THE CONFERENCE BEEN SUCCESSFUL, GIVEN THE POSITIVE RECORD OF THE PAST TWO YEARS, THERE WOULD BE A CLEAR EXPECTATION THAT US WOULD REMAIN IN THE ILO. BUT THE CONFERENCE, WITH THE CONFIDENTIAL

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EXCEPTION OF THE VOTING BY THE WESTERN INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES, TURNED OUT NEGATIVELY AND THE US IS CURRENTLY REVIEWING ITS OVERALL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ILO, INCLUDING THE COMPLETE RECORD OF THE LAST TWO YEARS.

D. REGARDING IMEC (INDUSTRIALIZED MARKET ECONOMY COUNTRIES) REPORTED "STATE OF SHOCK" AND MOUNTING FEARS THAT SOVIETS AND G-77 WILL CONTINUE TO DOMINATE ILO FOR ANTI-WESTERN PURPOSES, AS IT HAS IN PAST YEARS INCLUDING JUNE 1977 CONFERENCE, THIS WILL DEPEND MORE ON POLICIES IMEC NOW DECIDE TO ADOPT THAN ON WHETHER US IN OR OUT. IF THERE IS A CONTINUATION OF IMEC PASSIVE ATTITUDES, THEIR MOST EXTREME FEARS WILL BE REALIZED. BUT IF IMEC DECIDES TO RECOGNIZE IN PUBLIC STATEMENTS AND PRIVATE ACTIONS THEIR COLLECTIVE INTEREST IN INSISTING THAT OTHER ILO MEMBERS ADHERE TO CERTAIN PRINCIPLES THERE IS LESS REASON TO LOSE HEART. AFTER ALL, WITH OR WITHOUT US, IMEC COUNTRIES COLLECTIVELY CAN EXERT ENORMOUS INFLUENCE IN ILO. WITHOUT US THEY CONTRIBUTE APPROXIMATELY 40 PERCENT OF BUDGET. THEY CONTROL 6 OF 10 PERMANENT SEATS. THEY HAVE COLLECTIVE ABILITY TO VETO CHANGES IN ILO CONSTITUTION.

E. IN SHORT, IF IMEC COUNTRIES NOW MOVE BEYOND POLICY OF MERELY VOTING TOGETHER (AND THEN ONLY IN RESPONSE TO PRESSURE) TO POLICY OF COORDINATED LOBBYING IN CAPITALS THERE IS NO REASON WHY SMALL CORE OF SUPPORT WITHIN THIRD WORLD CANNOT INCREASE IN SIZE. THIS POSSIBILITY OF INCREASING THIRD WORLD SUPPORT ASSUMES GREATER PROPORTIONS WHEN IT IS REALIZED THAT THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES CAN NO LONGER COUNT ON WHAT THEY PERCEIVED AS A STANDOFF BETWEEN THE USSR AND THE US TO FACILITATE ACHIEVEMENT OF THEIR OBJECTIVES IN THE ORGANIZATION. THIS COORDINATED LOBBYING IS IN IMEC INTERESTS REGARDLESS OF WHETHER US REMAINS A CONFIDENTIAL

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MEMBER. PRIOR TO JUNE 1977 CONFERENCE, ONLY US WAS WILLING TO MAKE ILO ISSUES MATTERS OF ITS BILATERAL DIPLOMACY. LESSON OF JUNE 1977 SHOULD NOT BE THAT WEST CANNOT WIN BUT THAT ONE COUNTRY--THE US--WORKING ALONE CAN MAKE SOME PROGRESS BUT NOT ENOUGH. TOGETHER, HOWEVER, THE IMEC COUNTRIES COULD MAKE A DIFFERENCE. WHETHER THE IMEC COUNTRIES NOW COALESCE AND WORK TOGETHER WILL, IN FACT, DETERMINE WHETHER ILO REMAINS AN INSTITUTION IN THE FUTURE THAT DEMOCRATIC STATES WISH TO REMAIN IN, OR ASSOCIATE WITH.

F. THERE ARE DIFFERENT VALUE SYSTEMS AT WORK IN THE ILO. THESE ARE DIFFICULT TO RECONCILE. BUT THIS IS A PROBLEM THE IMEC COUNTRIES FACE IN EVERY INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTION. ELSEWHERE THEY HAVE FOUND THAT COALITIONS THAT SEEM MONOLITHIC OR BEYOND INFLUENCE CAN CHANGE IN LEADERSHIP OR DIRECTION. WITH OR WITHOUT THE US, THIS CAN HAPPEN IN THE ILO. THIS DOES NOT REQUIRE CONFRONTATION WITH THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES BUT ENGAGED COORDINATED DIPLOMACY, SOMETHING THUS FAR LACKING. IN THIS REGARD, WHATEVER FINAL US DECISION, ITS ATTITUDE TOWARDS ILO IN FUTURE WILL NECESSARILY REFLECT WHAT IT SEES. CONSEQUENTLY, IT IS CRITICAL NOT TO RETURN TO PRE-1975 POLICIES.

4. THE US GOVT IS CURRENTLY REVIEWING THE RECORD OF THE LAST 20 MONTHS SINCE THE FILING OF THE NOTICE OF WITHDRAWAL TO ASSESS THE PROGRESS MADE TOWARD THE GOAL OF REFORM OF THE ILO. THE ANALYSIS WILL INCLUDE AN EXAMINATION OF THE IMPLICATIONS FOR THE US, AND FOR THE ILO AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS OF THE US DECISION TO WITHDRAW OR CONTINUE MEMBERSHIP IN THE ILO. THE AFL-CIO INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE MET LAST WEEK FOR ITS ASSESSMENT AND DECISION ON LABOR'S RECOMMENDATION AND DECIDED TO RECOMMEND WITHDRAWAL. THE US CHAMBER OF COMMERCE HAS DECIDED TO RECOMMEND US WITHDRAWAL, BUT THESE DECISIONS HAVE NOT REPEAT NOT BEEN SENT TO USG AND WILL NOT BE

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UNTIL THE CABINET LEVEL COMMITTEE IS CONVENED.

5. IT IS ANTICIPATED THAT THE CABINET LEVEL COMMITTEE INCLUDING THE DEPARTMENTS OF STATE, LABOR, AND COMMERCE AND THE AFL-CIO AND THE US CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, WILL BE MEETING IN WASHINGTON AS SOON AS POSSIBLE; BUT NOT BEFORE MID-AUGUST. THE CABINET LEVEL COMMITTEE WILL MAKE A

RECOMMENDATION ON CONTINUED US PARTICIPATION IN THE ILO TO
THE PRESIDENT, WHO WILL MAKE THE FINAL DECISION.

6. WE HAVE MADE A COMMITMENT TO CONSULT WITH THE MEMBERS
OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY (IN RESPONSE TO THEIR REQUEST)
AND OTHER ALLIES PRIOR TO THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE FINAL
US DECISION. WE HAVE ARRANGED CONSULTATIONS IN GENEVA
JULY 26.

7. THIS MESSAGE INFO ONLY FOR: (A) ADDRESSEES IN
COUNTRIES NOT MEMBERS OF ILO (BANJUL, MASERU, PRETORIA,
CAPETOWN, MUSCAT, TAIPEI, SEOUL, HONG KONG, GABORONE;
(B) PEKING AND SINAI. VANCE

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